

**SUN BIN**  
**THE MILITARY METHODS**  
**1**  
**Capture of P'ang Chüan**

FORMERLY KING HUI, LORD of Liang, being about to attack Formerly Chao's capital of Han-tan, had General of the Army P'ang Chüan lead eighty thousand mailed troops to Ch'ih-ch'iu. King Wei, Lord of Ch'i, hearing about it, had General of the Army T'ien Chi lead eighty thousand mailed troops to a position on their border.

P'ang Chüan attacked Wey's capital city. General of the Army T'ien Chi addressed Sun Pin: "P'ang Chüan has taken Wey's capital. Should we rescue them or not?"

Sun Pin replied: "We should not."

T'ien Chi said: "If we do not rescue Wey, what should we do?"

Sun Pin said: "I suggest that we go south to attack P'ing-ling. The town of P'ing-ling is small but the district is large; the population is numerous; and its mailed soldiers abundant. It is a military town in Wei's Tung-yang region, difficult to attack. We would thereby display something dubious to them. When we attack P'ing-ling, Sung will be to the south, Wey to the north, and Shih-ch'iu will lie along our route. Accordingly, since our supply route will be cut off, we will show them we do not understand military affairs." Thereupon they broke camp and rushed to P'ing-ling.

Approaching P'ing-ling, T'ien Chi summoned Sun Pin and asked: "How will you manage this affair?"

Sun Pin said: "Among the high officials of our nearby border cities, which ones do not understand military affairs?"

T'ien Chi said: "The high officials of Ch'i-cheng and Kao-t'ang." Sun Pin said: "I suggest that we take the place where Wei's supplies are stored. To attempt this our two commanders will have to pass by Wei's cities of Heng and Chüan. The area is crossed by regional roads in all directions, and is one where the cities of Heng and Chüan can easily deploy their attached forces. Their wide roads are already occupied by chariots and soldiers. If our vanguard remains stalwart, and our main force remains intact, Wei's forces will move along the roads to attack and destroy the rear of our two detached forces and our two commanders will be killed."

Thereupon T'ien Chi segmented the forces attached to Ch'i-cheng and Kao-t'ang into two, and had them launch a flurried assault on P'ing-ling. Wei's forces from Heng and Chüan came forth along the regional roads in a continuous wave to mount a pincer attack upon their rear. The two high officials from Ch'i-cheng and Kao-t'ang fell prey to these tactics and were severely defeated.

General T'ien Chi summoned Sun Pin and inquired: "As planned, we unsuccessfully attacked and lost our forces from Ch'i-cheng and Kao-t'ang, which fell prey to our tactics and were defeated. How will affairs now be managed?"

Sun Pin said: "I suggest that you dispatch light chariots to the west, having them race to the suburbs of Liang in order to infuriate them. Divide up our troops and only dispatch a portion to immediately follow them, to show that we are few."

Thereupon T'ien Chi did it. As expected P'ang Chüan abandoned his supply wagons and arrived after a forced march at double pace.

Without allowing P'ang Chüan's army any rest, Sun Pin attacked and captured him at Kuei-ling. Thus it is said that Sun Pin fully realized the Tao of the military.

## 2

### Audience with King Wei

SUN PIN , IN HIS AUDIENCE WITH KING WEI , SAID :

“Now the military does not rely on an unvarying strategic configuration of power. This is the Tao transmitted from the Former Kings. Victory in warfare is the means by which to preserve vanquished states and continue severed generations. Not being victorious in warfare is the means by which to diminish territory and endanger the altars of state. For this reason military affairs cannot but be investigated. Yet one who takes pleasure in the military will perish, and one who finds profit in victory will be insulted. The military is not something to take pleasure in, victory not something through which to profit.

“Move only after all affairs have been prepared. Thus one whose walled city is small but defense solid has accumulated resources. One whose troops are few but army is strong has righteousness. Now mounting a defense without anything to rely upon, or engaging in battle without righteousness, no one under Heaven would be able to be solid and strong.

“At the time when Yao possessed All under Heaven there were seven tribes who dishonored the king’s edicts and did not put them into effect. There were the two Yi in the east, and four in the central states. It was not possible for Yao to be at ease and attain the profit of governing All under Heaven. He was victorious in battle and his strength was established; therefore, All under Heaven submitted.

“In antiquity Shen Nung did battle with the Fu and Sui; the Yellow Emperor did battle with Ch’ih Yu at Shu-lü; Yao attacked Kung Kung; Shun attacked Ch’e and drove off the Three Miao; T’ang deposed Chieh; King Wu attacked Chou; and the Duke of Chou obliterated the remnant state of Shang-yen when it rebelled.

“Thus if someone’s virtue is not like that of the Five Emperors; his ability does not reach that of the Three Kings; nor his wisdom match that of the Duke of Chou—and yet he says, ‘I want to accumulate benevolence and righteousness, practice the rites and music, and wear flowing robes and thereby prevent conflict and seizure’—it is not that Yao and Shun did not want this, but they could not attain it.

Therefore they mobilized the military to constrain the evil.”

### 3

## The Questions of King Wei

KING WEI OF CH'I , inquiring about employing the military, said to Sun Pin: "If two armies confront each other, their two generals looking across at each other, with both of them being solid and secure so that neither side dares to move first, what should be done?"

Sun Pin replied: "Employ some light troops to test them, commanded by some lowly but courageous officer. Focus on fleeing, do not strive for victory. Deploy your forces in concealment in order to abruptly assault their flanks. This is termed the 'Great Attainment.'"

King Wei asked: "Is there a method for employing the many and the few?"

Sun Pin said, "There is."

King Wei said: "If we are strong while the enemy is weak, if we are numerous while the enemy is few, how should we employ them?"

Sun Pin bowed twice and said: "This is the question of an enlightened King! To be numerous and moreover strong, yet still inquire about employing them is the Tao for making the state secure. The method is called 'Inducing the Army.' Disrupt your companies and disorder your ranks, in order to seemingly accord with the enemy's desires. Then the enemy will certainly engage you in battle."

King Wei asked: "If the enemy is numerous while we are few, if the enemy is strong while we are weak, how should we employ them?" Sun Pin said: "The strategy is termed 'Yielding to Awesomeness.' You must conceal the army's tail to ensure that the army will be able to withdraw. Long weapons should be in front, short ones to the rear. Establish roving crossbow units in order to provide support in exigencies. Your main force should not move in order to wait for the enemy to manifest their capabilities."

King Wei said: "Suppose we go forth and the enemy comes forth. We still do not know whether they are many or few. How should we employ the army?"

Sun Pin said: "The method is called 'Dangerous Completion.' If the enemy is well ordered, deploy into three formations. One should confront the enemy, two can provide mutual assistance. When they can halt they should halt; when they can move, they should move. Do not seek a quick victory."

King Wei asked: "How do we attack exhausted invaders?"

Sun Pin said: "You can make plans while waiting for them to find a route to life."

King Wei asked: "How do we attack someone of equal strength?"

Sun Pin said: “Confuse them so that they disperse their forces, then unite our troops and strike them, do not let the enemy know about it. But if they do not disperse, secure your position and halt. Do not attack in any situation that appears suspicious.”

King Wei said: “Is there a Tao for one to attack ten?”

Sun Pin said: “There is. ‘Attack where they are unprepared, go forth where they will not expect it.’”

King Wei said: “If the ground is level and the troops well ordered, but after engaging in battle they retreat, what does it mean?”

Sun Pin said: “It means that the deployment lacked a front.”

King Wei said: “How can we cause the people to always listen to orders?”

Sun Pin said: “Always be sincere.”

King Wei said, “Good. In discussing the army’s strategic power you are inexhaustible.”

T’ien Chi asked Sun Pin: “What causes trouble for the army? What causes difficulty for the enemy? How is it that walls and entrenchments are not taken? How does one lose the advantages of Heaven? How does one lose the advantages of Earth? How does one lose the people? I would like to ask if there is a Tao for these six?”

Sun Pin said: “There is. What causes trouble for the army is the terrain. What causes difficulty for the enemy is ravines. Thus it is said that three kilometers of wetlands will cause trouble for the army; crossing through such wetlands will result in leaving the main force behind. Thus it is said, ‘what causes trouble for the army is terrain, what causes trouble for the enemy is ravines.’ If the walls and entrenchments are not taken it is because of defensive ditches and defiles.”

T’ien Chi asked: “If we encounter a heavily ensconced force, what then?”

Sun Pin said: “Drum the advance and press them, employ ten ways to draw them out.”

T’ien Chi said: “When their deployment has already been determined, how can we cause the soldiers to invariably obey?”

Sun Pin said: “Be severe and show them the potential profits.”

T’ien Chi said: “Are not rewards and punishments the most urgent matters for the military?”

Sun Pin said: “They are not. Now rewards are the means by which to give happiness to the masses and cause soldiers to forget death. Punishments are the means by which to rectify the chaotic and cause the people to fear their superiors. They can be employed to facilitate victory, but they are not urgent matters.”

T’ien Chi said: “Are authority, strategic power, plans, and deception urgent matters for the military?”

Sun Pin said: “They are not. Now authority is the means by which to assemble the masses. Strategic power is the means by which to cause the soldiers to invariably fight. Plans are the means by which to cause the enemy to be unprepared. Deception is the means by which to put the enemy into difficulty. They can be employed to facilitate victory, but they are not urgent affairs.”

T’ien Chi angrily flushed: “These six are all employed by those who excel in military affairs, and yet you, sir, say they are not urgent. Then what matters are urgent?”

Sun Pin said: “Evaluating the enemy, estimating the difficulties of terrain, invariably investigating both near and far is the Tao of the general. Invariably attacking where they do not defend, this is the army’s urgency. Rewards and punishments are the bones.”

T’ien Chi asked Sun Pin: “Is there a Tao for deploying the army and not engaging in battle?”

Sun Pin said: "There is. Amass your troops in the ravines and increase the height of your fortifications, being silently alert without moving. You must not be greedy, you must not get angry."

T'ien Chi said: "If the enemy is numerous and martial but we must fight, is there a Tao?"

Sun Pin said: "There is. Augment your fortifications and expand your soldiers' determination. Strictly order and unify the masses. Avoid the enemy and make him arrogant. Inveigle and tire him. 'Attack where he is not prepared, go forth where he will not expect it.' You must be prepared to continue such actions for a long time."

T'ien Chi asked Sun Pin: "What about the Awl Formation? What about the Wild Geese Formation? How does one select the troops and strong officers? How about the strong crossbowmen running along and firing? What about the Fierce Wind Formation? What about the masses of troops?"

Sun Pin said: "The Awl Formation is the means by which to penetrate solid formations and destroy elite units. The Wild Geese Formation is the means by which to abruptly assault the enemy's flanks and respond to changes. Selecting the troops and strong officers is the means by which to break through enemy formations and capture their generals. Strong crossbowmen running along and firing are the means by which to take pleasure in battle and sustain it. The Fierce Wind Formation is the means by which to return from fierce engagements. Masses of troops are used to divide the effort and achieve victory. However, enlightened rulers and knowledgeable generals do not rely on masses of troops to seek success."

Sun Pin went out and his disciples asked him: "What were the questions of King Wei and T'ien Chi, minister and ruler, like?"

Sun Pin said: "King Wei asked nine questions, T'ien Chi asked seven. They are very close to knowing all about military affairs, but have not yet penetrated the Tao. I have heard that those who are always sincere flourish; those who establish righteousness employ military force; those without adequate preparation suffer injury; and those who exhaust their troops perish. In three generations Ch'i will be troubled."

### ***Fragments***

"If one excels then the army will prepare for him."

"If you are double the enemy, halt and do not move, be full and await them."

"One who is not prepared will suffer difficulty from the terrain."

## T'ien Chi Inquires About Fortifications

T'ien Chi asked Sun Pin:

T'ien "If our troops, being few, unexpectedly encounter an enemy, what tactics should we employ?"

Sun Pin said: "Order our crossbowmen to rapidly deploy and spread out our other bowmen."

T'ien Chi said: "When we are in the field, our troops always improve their positions and establish temporary fortifications. How should this be done?"

Sun Pin said: "This, general, is an enlightened question, for these are things that people overlook or rarely find urgent. They are the means for hastily erecting field defenses and raising the troops' determination."

T'ien Chi said: "May I hear about them?"

Sun Pin said: "You may. By employing these measures you can respond to sudden distress, occupy defiles and passes, and survive in the midst of fatal terrain. This is the way I took P'ang Chüan and captured Imperial Prince Shen."

T'ien Chi said: "Excellent. The affair is long past but the tactics are still not apparent."

Sun Pin said: "Caltraps are employed as ditches and moats. Chariots are employed as fortifications. The protective enclosures on the chariots are employed as parapets. Shields are employed as battlements. The long weapons are placed next in order to remedy any breakthrough. The short spears are placed inside them in order to support the long weapons. The other short weapons follow in turn in order to make it difficult for the enemy to withdraw and to take advantage of the enemy's weaknesses. Crossbows are placed behind them to act as trebuchets. In the middle there aren't any men, to allow for flexible response.

"Once you have determined how to deploy your troops, establish detailed tactics for the engagement. The *Ordinances* state: 'Place the crossbows behind the caltraps and fire according to a predetermined sequence only after the enemy enters the caltraps.' The top of the fortifications should be manned by equal numbers of crossbows and spear-tipped halberds. The *Methods* states: 'Move only after receiving reports from the spies you dispatched.'

"Five kilometers outside your defensive lines establish lookout posts, ordering that they be within sight of each other. If you are encamped on high ground, deploy the lookouts in a square array; if you are encamped on low ground, deploy them around a circular perimeter. To signal, at night beat the drums, in the daytime raise flags."

### *Fragments*

Sun Pin said: "Do not fail to mount a defense on account of the army's fear."

Sun Pin said: "To know beforehand whether one will be victorious or not victorious is termed 'knowing the Tao.'"

## 5

# Selecting the Troops

### SUN-TZU SAID:

“For the army, victory lies in selecting the troops; courage lies in the regulations; skill lies in the strategic configuration of power; sharpness lies in trust; power lies in the Tao; wealth lies in a speedy return; strength lies in giving rest to the people; injury lies in frequent battles.”

Sun Pin said: “The implementation of Virtue is the army’s great resource. Trust is the army’s clear reward. One who detests warfare is the army’s true kingly implement. Gaining the masses is the basis for victory.”

Sun Pin said: “There are five factors to constantly being victorious. A commander who obtains the ruler’s sole authority will be victorious. One who knows the Tao will be victorious. One who has gained the masses will be victorious. One whose left and right are in harmony will be victorious. One who analyzes the enemy and estimates the terrain will be victorious.”

Sun Pin said: “There are five factors to constantly not being victorious. A general who is hampered by the ruler will not be victorious. One who does not know the Tao will not be victorious. A perverse general will not be victorious. One who does not use spies will not be victorious. One who fails to gain the masses will not be victorious.”

Sun Pin said: “Victory lies in exhausting trust, making rewards clear, selecting the troops, and taking advantage of the enemy’s weaknesses. This is referred to as King Wu’s treasure.”

Sun Pin said: “One who has not obtained the ruler’s trust does not act as his general.”

Sun Pin said: “Generals have three essential traits. The first is called trust, the second loyalty, the third daring. What loyalty? To the ruler. What trust? In rewards. What daring? To eliminate the bad. If someone is not loyal to the ruler, you cannot risk employing him in the army. One whose rewards are not trusted, the nobles will not regard as Virtuous. One who does not dare eliminate the bad will not be respected by the nobles.”

## 6

# Lunar Warfare

### SUN-TZU SAID:

“In the region between Heaven and Earth nothing is more noble than man. Warfare is not a matter of a single factor. If the seasons of Heaven, the advantages of Earth, and the harmony of men, these three, are not realized, even though one might be victorious there will be disaster. For this reason they must be mutually relied upon to engage in battle; thereafter only when it is unavoidable engage in warfare. Thus if one accords with the seasons to engage in warfare, it will not be necessary to employ the masses again. If one engages in battle without any basis and gains a minor victory, it is due to astrological influences.”

Sun Pin said: “If in ten battles someone is victorious six times, it is due to the stars. If in ten battles someone is victorious seven times, it is due to the sun. If in ten battles someone is victorious eight times, it is due to the moon. If in ten battles someone is victorious nine times, the moon has waxed strongly. If in ten battles someone is victorious ten times, the general excels, but it leads to misfortune.”

Sun Pin said: “There are five factors which preclude victory. If any one of the five is present you will not be victorious. Thus in the Tao of warfare there are the following common situations: Many men are killed but the company commanders are not captured. The company commanders are captured but the encampment is not taken. The encampment is taken but the commanding general is not captured. The army is destroyed and the general killed. Thus if one realizes the Tao, even though the enemy wants to live they cannot.”



## 8 Formations

### SUN-TZU SAID:

“When someone whose wisdom is inadequate commands the army it is conceit. When someone whose courage is inadequate commands the army it is bravado. When someone does not know the Tao nor has engaged in a sufficient number of battles commands the army it becomes a matter of luck.

“To ensure the security of a state of ten thousand chariots; to bring glory to the ruler of ten thousand chariots; and to preserve the lives of the people of a state of ten thousand chariots, only a general who knows the Tao is capable. Above he knows the Tao of Heaven; below he knows the patterns of Earth; within the state he has gained the hearts of the people; outside it he knows the enemy’s true condition; and in deploying his forces he knows the principles for the eight formations. If he perceives victory he engages in battle; if he does not perceive it he remains quiet. This is the general of a true king.”

Sun Pin said: “As for employing the eight formations in battle: in accord with the advantages of the terrain use appropriate formations from among the eight. Employ a deployment which segments the troops into three, each formation having an elite front, and each elite front having a rear guard. They should all await their orders before moving. Fight with one of them, reserve the other two. Employ one to attack the enemy, use the other two to consolidate the gains. If the enemy is weak and confused, use your picked troops first to exploit it. If the enemy is strong and well disciplined, use your weak troops first in order to entice them.

“The chariots and cavalry that participate in a battle should be divided into three forces, one for the right, one for the left, and one for the rear. If the terrain is easy make the chariots numerous; if difficult, make the cavalry numerous. If constricted then increase the crossbows. On both difficult and easy terrain you must know the ‘tenable’ and ‘fatal’ ground. Occupy tenable ground, attack on fatal ground.”

## 8

# Treasures of Terrain

### SUN-TZU SAID:

“As for the Tao of terrain, *yang* constitutes the exterior, *yin* constitutes the interior. The direct constitutes the warp, techniques constitute the woof. When the woof and the warp have been realized deployments will not be confused. The direct traverses land where vegetation thrives; techniques take advantage of where the foliage is half dead.

“As for the field of battle, the sun is the essence but the eight winds which arise must not be forgotten. Crossing rivers; confronting hills; going contrary to the current’s flow; occupying killing ground; and confronting masses of trees—all these that I have just mentioned, in all five one will not be victorious.

“A mountain on which one deploys on the south side is a tenable mountain; a mountain on which one deploys on the eastern side is a fatal mountain.

“Water that flows to the east is life-sustaining water; water that flows to the north is deadly water. Water that does not flow is death.

“The conquest relationship of the five types of terrain is as follows: mountains conquer high hills; high hills conquer hills; hills conquer irregular mounds; irregular mounds conquer forests and plains.

“The conquest relationship of five types of grasses is as follows: profusion of hedges; thorny brambles; cane; reeds; and sedge grass.

“The conquest relationship of the five soils is as follows: blue conquers yellow; yellow conquers black; black conquers red; red conquers white; white conquers blue.

“Five types of terrain are conducive to defeat: gorges with streams; valleys; river areas; marshes; and salt flats.

“The five killing grounds are Heaven’s Well; Heaven’s Jail; Heaven’s Net; Heaven’s Fissure; and Heaven’s Pit. These five graves are killing grounds. Do not occupy them, do not remain on them.

“In the spring do not descend; in fall do not ascend. Neither the army nor any formation should attack to the front right. Establish your perimeter to the right; do not establish your perimeter to the left.”

## 9

# Preparation of Strategic Power

SUN-TZU SAID:

“Now being endowed with teeth and mounting horns, having claws in front and spurs in back, coming together when happy, fighting when angry, this is the Tao of Heaven, it cannot be stopped. Thus those who lack Heavenly weapons provide them themselves. This was an affair of extraordinary men. The Yellow Emperor created swords and imagized military formations upon them. Yi created bows and crossbows and imagized strategic power on them. Yü created boats and carts and imagized tactical changes on them. T’ang and Wu made long weapons and imagized the strategic imbalance of power on them.

“Now these four—formations, power, changes, and strategic imbalance of power—are the employment of the military. How do we know that swords constituted the basis for formations? Morning and night they are worn but not necessarily used. Thus it is said, deploying in formation but not engaging in battle, this is how the sword constitutes the basis for formations. If a sword has no edge, even someone with the courage of Meng Pen would not dare advance into battle with it. If a formation has no elite front, anyone without the courage of Meng Pen who would dare command it to advance does not know the essence of military affairs. If a sword lacks a haft, even a skilled officer would be unable to advance and engage in battle. If a formation lacks a rear guard, anyone who is not a skilled officer but dares command it to advance does not know the true nature of military affairs. Thus if there is an elite front and rear guard, and they mutually trust each other and are unmoving, the enemy’s soldiers will invariably run off. Without an elite front and rear guard, the army will be worn out and disordered.

“How do we know that bows and crossbows constituted the basis for strategic power? Released from between the shoulders they kill a man beyond a hundred paces without him realizing the arrow’s path.

Thus it is said that bows and crossbows are strategic power.

“How do we know that boats and carts constituted the basis for tactical changes? . . . .

“How do we know that long weapons constituted the basis for the strategic imbalance of power? In attacking they neither need to strike from high nor from below but still shatter the forehead and destroy the shoulders. Thus it is said that long weapons are the basis for the strategic imbalance of power.

“In general, as for these four—those who gain these four survive, those who lose these four die. They must be complied with in order to complete their Tao. If one knows their Tao then the army will be successful and the ruler will be famous. If someone wants to employ them but does not know their Tao, the army will lack success. Now the Tao of the army is fourfold: formations, strategic power, changes, and strategic imbalance of power. Investigating these four is the means by which to destroy strong enemies and take fierce generals. What is seen up close but strikes far off is the strategic imbalance of power. In the daytime making the flags numerous, at night making the drums many is the means by which to send them off to battle. Now these four are the employment of the military. People all take them for their own use, but no one penetrates their Tao.

“One who has an elite front is extremely cautious in selecting troops for the formations.”

# 10

## Nature of the Army

### SUN-TZU SAID:

“If you want to understand the nature of the army, the crossbow and arrows are the model. Arrows are the troops, the crossbow is the general. The one who releases them is the ruler. As for arrows, the metal is at the front, the feathers are at the rear. Thus they are powerful and excel in flight, for the front is heavy and the rear is light. Today in ordering the troops the rear is heavy and the front light, so when deployed in formation they are well ordered, but when pressed toward the enemy they do not obey. This is because in controlling the troops men do not model on the arrow.

“The crossbow is the general. When the crossbow is drawn, if the stock is not straight, or if one side of the bow is strong and one side weak and unbalanced, then in shooting the arrow the two arms will not be at one. Then even though the arrow’s lightness and heaviness are correct, the front and rear are appropriate, it still will not hit the target.

“If the general’s employment of his mind is not in harmony with the army, even though the formation’s lightness and heaviness are correct, and the front and rear are appropriate, they still will not conquer the enemy.

“Even if the arrow’s lightness and heaviness are correct, the front and rear are appropriate, the crossbow drawn straight, and the shooting of the arrow at one, if the archer is not correct, it still will not hit the target. If the lightness and heaviness of the troops are correct, the front and rear appropriate, and the general in harmony with the army, but the ruler does not excel, they still will not conquer the enemy.

Thus it is said for the crossbow to hit the objective it must realize these four. For the army to be successful there must be the ruler, the general, and the troops, these three. Thus it is said that an army conquering an enemy is no different from a crossbow hitting a target. This is the Tao of the military. If the model of the arrow is complied with, the Tao will be complete. When someone understands the Tao, the army will be successful, and the ruler will be famous.”

# 11

## Implementing Selection

SUN-TZU SAID:

Su “The Tao for employing the military and affecting the people is authority and the steelyard. Authority and the steelyard are the means by which to select the Worthy and choose the good. *Yin* and *yang* are the means by which to assemble the masses and engage the enemy. First you must correct the balance, then the weights, and then they will have already attained the standard. This is referred to as being inexhaustible. Evaluate talent and performance by weighing them with the standard, solely to determine what is appropriate.

“Private and state wealth are one. Now among the people there are those who have insufficient longevity but an excess of material goods, and those who have insufficient material goods but an excess of longevity. Only enlightened kings and extraordinary men know this, and therefore can retain them. The dead will not find it odious, those from whom it is taken will not be resentful. This is the inexhaustible Tao. When properly implemented, the people will all exhaust their strength. Those near the ruler will not commit thievery, those far away will not be dilatory.

“When material goods are plentiful there will be contention; when there is contention the people will not regard their superiors as Virtuous. When goods are few they will incline toward their superiors; when they incline toward them then All under Heaven will respect them. If what the people seek is the means by which I seek their performance, this will be the basis for the military’s endurance. In employing the army this is the state’s treasure.”

## 12

# Killing Officers

**SUN-TZU SAID:**

“Make rewards and emoluments clear and then the troops will advance without hesitation. If you invariably investigate and implement them, the officers will die. If you kill the officers, then the officers will certainly submit to your awesomeness.

“After you have determined your plans, cause the officers to know them. Knowledgeable officers can be trusted, so do not allow the people to depart from them. Only when victory is certain does one engage in battle, but do not let the soldiers know it. When engaged in battle do not forget the flanks.

“If you treat them deferentially then the officers will die for you. Even though the officers will die, their names will be transmitted to posterity. If you encourage them with fundamental pleasures, they will die for their native places. If you importune them with family relationships, they will die for the ancestral graves. If you honor them with feasts, they will die for the honor of food and drink. If you have them dwell in tranquility, they will die in the urgency of defense. If you inquire about their febrile diseases, they will die for your solicitude.”

## 13

# Expanding Ch'i

### SUN-TZU SAID:

“When you form the army and assemble the masses, concentrate upon stimulating their *ch'i*. When you again decamp and reassemble the army, concentrate upon ordering the soldiers and sharpening their *ch'i*. When you approach the border and draw near the enemy, concentrate upon honing their *ch'i*. When the day for battle has been set, concentrate upon making their *ch'i* decisive. When the day for battle is at hand, concentrate upon expanding their *ch'i*.

“The commanding general assembles the troops and promulgates the mission statement in order to overawe the warriors of the Three Armies, the means by which he stimulates their *ch'i*.

“The commanding general reassembles the troops and issues his orders, the means by which to sharpen their *ch'i*.

“The short coat and coarse clothes, which encourage the warriors' determination, are the means by which to hone their *ch'i*. Prior to striking out for the engagement the commanding general issues orders to have every single man prepare three days' rations. As for the state's soldiers, their families are honored and the men motivated.

“When about to engage in combat, sever all communications to cut off hope for life. Emissaries do not come from the state, officers from the army do not go forth in order to make the troops' *ch'i* decisive. The commanding general summons the commander of the camp security forces and informs him: ‘Do not stint the men's food or drink in order to expand their *ch'i*.’

“When encamping upon easy terrain you must be numerous and esteem the martial, for then the enemy will certainly be defeated. If their *ch'i* is not sharp they will be plodding. When they are plodding they will not reach their objective. When they do not reach their objective, they will lose the advantage.

“When on campaign, if their *ch'i* is not honed the soldiers will be frightened. When they are frightened they will mass together. When they mass together they will be unable to respond to the enemy's assault.

“When their *ch'i* is not decisive then they will be slack. When they are slack they will not be focused and will easily disperse. If they easily disperse, when they encounter difficulty they will be defeated.

“If their *ch'i* is not expanded, they will be lazy. If they are lazy it will be difficult to employ them. If it is difficult to employ them they will not be able to converge on their objective.

“If they are not exposed to hardship, they will not know to constrain themselves. When they do not know to constrain themselves affairs will be overturned.

“If the members of the squad of five lose a member and fail to rescue him, they themselves will die and their families will be exterminated. The commanding general summons his subordinates, exhorts them, and then attacks.”

## 14

### Offices I

#### SUN-TZU SAID:

“In general, to command troops, make formations advantageous, and unify the mailed soldiers, you should establish offices as appropriate to the body. Implement orders with colored insignia; have the chariots carry pennants to distinguish the relationships of things; arrange the rows by squads; organize the troops by hamlets and neighborhoods; confer leadership in accord with the towns and villages; settle doubts with flags and pennons; disseminate orders with gongs and drums; unify the soldiers with tight marching; and form them into close order, shoulder to shoulder.

“To hunt down the enemy’s army use an elongated formation; labor and exhaust them by constraining and contravening them.

“To deploy the regiments use an endangering formation.

“Engage in arrow warfare with the Cloud Formation.

“Defend against and surround the enemy with an entangled, flowing formation.

“Seize the enemy’s fierce beak with a closing envelopment.

“Attack the already defeated by wrapping and seizing them.

“When racing to rescue an army employ a close formation.

“In fierce combat use alternated rows.

“Employ heavy troops in order to attack light troops.

“Employ light troops in order to attack the dispersed.

“When attacking mountain cliffs employ the ‘Arrayed Walls.’

“On expansive terrain employ a square formation.

“When you confront heights and deploy your forces, employ a piercing formation.

“For ravines, when pressed employ a circular formation.

“When engaged in combat on easy terrain, to effect a martial retreat employ your soldiers in a rear guard action.

“When your strategic power exceeds the enemy’s, when deploying to approach them employ a flanking attack on the wings.

“In ordinary warfare, when the short weapons clash employ a sharp piercing front.

“When the enemy is bottled up in a ravine, release the mouth in order to entice them farther away.

“Amidst grasses and heavy vegetation use *yang* (visible) pennants.

“After being victorious in battle, deploy in formation in order to rouse the state.

“To create awesomeness, deploy with mountains as the right wing.

“When the road is thorny and heavily overgrown, use a zigzag advance.

“To facilitate exhausting the enemy use the Awl Formation.

“In ravines and gullies use intermixed elements.

“When turning about and withdrawing use measures to entangle the enemy.

“When circumventing mountains and forests, use segmented units in succession.

“Attacking state capitals and towns with water will prove effective.

“For night withdrawals use clearly written bamboo strips.

“To maintain alertness at night use passes with counterauthorizations.

“To counter raiding forces that forcefully penetrate the interior use ‘Death Warriors.’

“To go against short weapons use long weapons and chariots.

“Use chariots to mount incendiary attacks on supplies under transport.

“To realize a sharp edged deployment use the Awl Formation.



“To deploy a small number of troops use united, intermixed forces; combining mixed forces is the means by which to resist being surrounded.

“Rectifying the ranks and systematizing the pennants are the means by which to bind the formations together.

“Breaking apart and intermixing like clouds are the means by which to create a tactical imbalance of power and explosive movement.

“Turbulent winds and shaking formations are the means by which to exploit doubts.

“Hidden plans and concealed deceptions are the means by which to inveigle the enemy into combat.

“Descending dragons, hidden power, and deployed ambushes are the means by which to fight in the mountains.

“Unusual movements and perverse actions are the means by which to crush the enemy at fords.

“Being unexpected and relying on suddenness are the means by which to conduct unfathomable warfare.

“Preventative ditches and circular formations are the means by which to engage a superior enemy in battle with a few troops.

“Spreading out the pennants and making the flags conspicuous are the means by which to cause doubt in the enemy.

“The Whirlwind Formation and swift chariots are the means by which to pursue a fleeing enemy.

“When under duress, shifting the army is the means by which to prepare for a strong enemy.

“The Floating Marsh Formation and flank attacks are the means by which to fight an enemy on a confined road.

“Slow movements and frequent avoidance are the means by which to entice an enemy to try to trample you.

“Zealous training and whirlwind alacrity are the means by which to counter piercing thrusts.

“Solid formations and massed battalions are the means to attack an enemy’s fiery strength.

“Analytically positioning fences and screens is the means by which to bedazzle and make the enemy doubtful.

“Deliberate tactical errors and minor losses are the means by which to bait the enemy.

“Creating heavily disadvantageous circumstances is the means by which to trouble and exhaust the enemy.

“Patrolling in detail and verbal challenges are the means by which to maintain security for the army at night.

“Numerous supply sources and dispersed provisions are the means to facilitate victory.

“The resolute are the means to defend against invasion.

“The various units moving in turn is the means by which to pass over bridges.

“Reckless withdrawals and roundabout entries are the means by which to release the army from difficulty.”

## 15

# Strengthening the Army

KING WEI ASKED SUN PIN:

“In instructing me how to strengthen the army none of the officers in Ch’i espouse the same Tao. Some instruct me about government; some instruct me about restraint in making impositions; and some instruct me to dispense provisions to the people. Some instruct me about tranquility, others about diverse practices. Among what they teach, what should I put into practice?”

Sun Pin replied: “None of them are urgent for strengthening the army.”

King Wei said: “Then what is urgent for strengthening the army?”

Sun Pin said: “Enrich the state.”

King Wei said: “How should I go about enriching the state?”

# 16

## Ten Deployments

IN GENERAL, there are ten deployments: square, circular, diffuse, concentrated, Awl, Wild Geese, hooked, Dark Rising, incendiary, and aquatic. Each of them has its advantages:

The square deployment is for cutting.

The circular deployment is for unifying.

The diffuse deployment is for rapid (flexible) response.

The concentrated deployment is to prevent being cut off and taken.

Deployment into the Awl Formation is for decisively severing the enemy.

Deployment into the Wild Geese Formation is for exchanging archery fire.

Deployment into the hooked formation is the means by which to change targets and alter plans.

The Dark Rising deployment is for causing doubts in the enemy's masses and difficulty for his plans.

The incendiary deployment is the means to seize enemy encampments.

The aquatic deployment is the means to inundate the solid.

The tactics for square deployment: You must thin out the troops in the middle and make those on the sides thicker. The reserve (ready response) formations are at the rear. By thinning out the middle the general can effect a rapid response. By expanding and making the sides heavy, the general can cut the enemy. Retaining the reserves in the rear is the means by which to react quickly.

The tactics for diffuse deployment: Armor is scarce and men are few. For this reason make it firm. Martial prowess lies in the flags and pennants; showing large numbers of men lies in your weapons. Thus the soldiers must disperse and maintain their internal separation. Make the flags, banners, and feathered pennants numerous; sharpen your blades to act as your flanks. For them not to be compressed by the enemy when diffuse, or surrounded when concentrated, lies in exercising great care. The chariots do not race, the infantry does not run. The tactics for diffuse deployment lie in creating numerous small operational units. Some advance, others retreat. Some attack, others hold and defend. Some launch frontal assaults, others press their developing weaknesses. Thus the diffuse deployment is able to seize the enemy's elite forces.

The tactics for concentrated deployment: Do not augment the spacing between the men. When they are compressed, gather your blades at the head of the formation and then extend it forward while the front and rear mutually preserve each other. Amidst the changes of battle do not alter it. If the mailed soldiers are afraid, have them sit. Use sound to direct them to sit and arise. Do not dispatch any forces after enemy troops that go off; do not stop those who come forth. Some of our troops should attack their circuitous routes of approach, others should "insult" their elite troops. Make them as dense as feather down without any gaps; when they turn about and retreat they should be like a mountain. Then the concentrated deployment cannot be taken.

Deployment into the Awl Formation should be like a sword. If the tip is not sharp it will not penetrate; if the blade is not thin it will not cut; if the foundation is not thick you cannot deploy the formation. For this reason the tip must be sharp, the blade must be thin, and the foundation must be substantial. Only then can a deployment into the Awl Formation decisively sever the enemy.

Deployment into the Wild Geese Formation: The front ranks should be like a baboon, the rear ranks should be like a wildcat. Attack from three sides, not letting the enemy escape your net to preserve themselves. This is referred to as the function of the Wild Geese deployment.

When deployed into the hooked formation, the front ranks must be square, while those conjoined on the left and right must be hooked. When the three sounds (of the drums, gongs, and pipes) are already complete, flags in the five colors must be prepared. When the sounds of our commands are clearly discriminated and the troops all know the five flags, there is no front or rear, no above or below.

In the Dark Rising deployment you must make the flags, pennants, and feathered banners numerous; the drums should be integrated and resounding. If the mailed troops are confused have them sit; if the chariots are disordered array them in rows. When they have been ordered, the infantry should come forth with a great pounding and tumult, as if descending from Heaven, as if coming out from Earth, and be unwavering. Throughout the day they will not be taken. This is referred to as the Dark Rising deployment.

The tactics for incendiary warfare: when your ditches and ramparts have already been completed, construct another outer ring of ditches and moats. Every five paces pile up firewood, being certain to equalize the quantities in each pile. A designated number of attendants should be assigned to them. Order men to make linked *chevaux-defrise*; they must be light and sharp. If it is windy, [avoid positions downwind or igniting fires in camp. Once the engagement commences] if the vapors from a fire overspread you and you are unable to conquer the enemy, stand down and retreat.

The tactics for incendiary warfare: if the enemy is downwind in an area abundant with dry grass where the soldiers of their Three Armies will not have anywhere to escape, then you can mount an incendiary attack. When there is a frigid fierce wind, abundant vegetation and undergrowth, and firewood and grass for fuel already piled up, while their earthworks have not yet been prepared, in such circumstances you can mount an incendiary attack. Use the flames to confuse them, loose arrows like rain. Beat the drums and set up a clamor to motivate your soldiers. Assist the attack with strategic power. These are the tactics for incendiary warfare.

The tactics for (defensive) aquatic warfare: You must make the infantry numerous and the chariots few. Command them to fully pre- pare all the necessary equipment, such as hooks, repelling poles, cypress wood, pestles, light boats, oars, baskets, and sails. When advancing, you must follow close on; when withdrawing do not press together. When mounting a flank attack follow the current's flow, taking their men as the target.

The tactics for (aggressive) aquatic warfare: nimble boats should be used as flags, swift boats should be used as messengers. When the enemy goes off pursue them; when the enemy comes forth press them. Resist or yield as appropriate, and in accord with the situation organize against them. When they shift their forces make them change their plans; when they are deploying, strike them; when they are properly assembled, separate them. Accordingly, the weapons include spades and the chariots have defensive infantry. You must investigate their numerical strength as many or few, strike their boats, seize the fords, and show the people that the infantry is coming.

These are the tactics for aquatic warfare.

# 17

## Ten Questions

### INQUIRING ABOUT THE MILITARY :

“Suppose our army encounters the enemy and both establish encampments. The provisions and foodstuffs for both sides are equal and ample; our men and arms balanced with the enemy’s; while both ‘guest’ (the invader) and ‘host’ (the defender) are afraid. If the enemy has deployed in a circular formation in order to await us and relies upon it for his solidity, how should we strike them?”

“To strike them, the masses of our Three Armies should be divided to comprise four or five operational groups. Some of them should assault them and then feign retreat, displaying fear to them. When they see we are afraid, they will divide up their forces and pursue us with abandon, thereby confusing and destroying their solidity. The four drums should rise up in unison, our five operational forces should all attack together. When all five arrive simultaneously, the Three Armies will be united in their sharpness. This is the Tao for striking a circular formation.”

“Suppose our army encounters the enemy and both establish encampments. The enemy is rich while we are poor; the enemy is numerous while we are few; the enemy is strong while we are weak. If they approach in a square formation, how should we strike them?”

To strike them deploy in the diffuse formation and fragment them; if they are properly assembled, separate them; engage them in battle and then feign retreat; and kill the general for their rear guard without letting them become aware of it. This is the Tao for striking a square formation.”

“Suppose our army encounters the enemy and both establish encampments. If the enemy’s troops are already numerous and strong; muscular, agile, and resolute; and have deployed into a sharp formation in order to await us, how should we strike them?”

“To strike them you must segment into three operational groups to separate them. One should be stretched out horizontally, two should go off to strike their flanks. Their upper ranks will be afraid and their lower ranks confused. When the lower and upper ranks are already in chaos, their Three Armies will then be severely defeated. This is the Tao for striking a sharp deployment.”

“Suppose our army encounters the enemy and both establish encampments. The enemy is already numerous and strong, and have assumed an extended horizontal deployment. We have deployed and await them, but our men are few and incapable of withstanding them. How should we strike them?”

“To strike them you must segment our soldiers into three operational groups and select the ‘death warriors.’ Two groups should be deployed in an extended array with long flanks; one should consist of talented officers and selected troops. They should assemble to strike at the enemy’s critical point. This is the Tao for killing their general and striking horizontal deployments.”

“Suppose our army encounters the enemy and both establish encampments. Our men and weapons are numerous but our chariots and cavalry are few. If the enemy’s men are ten times ours, how should we attack them?”

“To attack them you should conceal yourselves in the ravines and take the defiles as your base, being careful to avoid broad, easy terrain. This is because easy terrain is advantageous for chariots while ravines are advantageous to infantry. This is the Tao for striking chariots in such circumstances.”

“Suppose our army encounters the enemy and both establish encampments. Our chariots and cavalry are numerous, but our men and weapons are few. If the enemy’s men are ten times ours, how should we attack them?”

“To attack them carefully avoid ravines and narrows; break open a route and lead them, coercing them toward easy terrain. Even though the enemy is ten times more numerous, easy terrain will be conducive to our chariots and cavalry, and our Three Armies can attack. This is the Tao for striking infantry.”

“Suppose our army encounters the enemy and both establish encampments. Our provisions and food supplies have been disrupted. Our infantry and weapons are inadequate to be relied upon. If we abandon our base and attack, the enemy’s men are ten times ours. How should we strike them?”

“To strike them when the enemy’s men have already deployed into and are defending the narrows, we should not enter the ravine but turn about and inflict damage upon their vacuities. This is the Tao for striking an enemy on contentious terrain.”

“Suppose our army encounters the enemy and both establish encampments. The enemy’s generals are courageous and difficult to frighten. Their weapons are strong, their men numerous and selfreliant. All the warriors of their Three Armies are courageous and untroubled. Their generals are awesome; their soldiers are martial; their officers strong; and their provisions well supplied. None of the feudal lords dares contend with them. How should we strike them?”

“To strike them announce that you do not dare fight. Show them that you are incapable; sit about submissively and await them in order to make their thoughts arrogant and apparently accord with their ambitions. Do not let them recognize your ploy. Thereupon strike where unexpected; attack where they do not defend; apply pressure where they are indolent; and attack their doubts. Being both haughty and martial, when their Three Armies break camp the front and rear will not look at each other. Therefore strike their middle just as if you had the infantry strength to do it. This is the Tao for striking a strong, numerous foe.”

“Suppose our army encounters the enemy and both establish encampments. The enemy’s men have concealed themselves in the mountains and taken the passes as their base. Our distant forces cannot engage them in battle, but nearby we have no foothold. How should we strike them?”

“To strike them you must force them to move from some of the passes they have taken onto easy terrain and then they will be endangered. Attack positions that they must rescue. Force them to leave their strongholds in order to analyze their tactical thinking and then set up ambushes and establish support forces. Strike their masses when they are in movement. This is the Tao for striking those concealed in strongholds.”

“Suppose our army encounters the enemy and both ‘guest’ and ‘host’ have deployed. The disposition of the enemy’s men is like a woven, flat basket. If I estimate the enemy’s intentions, they seem to want us to penetrate their lines and be overwhelmed. How should we strike them?”

“To strike them the thirsty should not drink, the hungry should not eat. Segment into three operational groups and employ two to assemble and strike their critical point. When the enemy has already initiated a response toward the middle, our talented officers and selected soldiers should then strike their two flanks. In this fashion their Three Armies will be severely defeated. This is the Tao for striking basket-like deployments.”

# 18

## Regulating Mailed Troops

### Fragments

“If you want to engage in battle, act as if deranged.”

“Select your troops in accord with (the situation).”

“When the left and right flanks attack by rapidly converging, this is termed a ‘sharp hooking strike.’

“If you entice them far off, the enemy will roll up their armor to race forward.”

“Control and isolate their general, rattle his mind, and then strike.”

## Distinction Between Guest and Host

ARMIES ARE DISTINGUISHED as being “guests” or “hosts.” The guest’s forces are comparatively numerous, the host’s forces comparatively few. Only if the guest is double and the host half can they contend as enemies.

The host establishes his position first, the guest establishes his position afterward. The host ensconces himself on the terrain and relies on his strategic power to await the guest who contravenes mountain passes and traverses ravines to arrive. Now if they contravene mountain passes and traverse ravines only to retreat and thereby dare to cut their own throats rather than advancing and daring to resist the enemy, what is the reason? It is because their strategic configuration of power is not conducive to attacking and the terrain is not advantageous.

If their strategic power is conducive and the terrain advantageous, then the people will advance by themselves. If their strategic power is not conducive and the terrain not advantageous, the people will retreat by themselves. Those who are referred to as excelling in warfare make their strategic power conducive and the terrain advantageous.

If the mailed troops are counted by the hundreds of thousands, while the people have a surplus of grain that they are unable to eat, they have an excess. If the number of troops dwelling in a state is numerous, but the number employed is few, then the standing forces are excessive and those employed in combat insufficient. If several hundred thousand mailed soldiers go forth a thousand by a thousand, continuing on thousands after thousands, tens of thousands are thereby dispatched toward us. Those who are referred to as excelling at warfare excel at cutting and severing them, just as if a hand happened to wipe them away. One who can divide up the enemy’s soldiers, who can repress the enemy’s soldiers, will have enough men even with the smallest amounts. One who cannot divide up the enemy’s soldiers, who can not repress the enemy’s soldiers, will be insufficient even if several times more numerous.

Is it that the more numerous will be victorious? Then calculate the numbers and engage in battle. Is it that the richest will win? Then measure the grain supplies and engage in battle. Is it that the sharpest weapons and stoutest armor will win? Then it will be easy to foretell victory. Since this is not the case, the rich still do not dwell in security; the poor do not yet dwell in danger; the numerous have not yet attained victory; the few are not yet defeated. Now what determines victory or defeat, security or danger, is the Tao.

If the enemy’s men are more numerous but you can cause them to become divided and unable to rescue each other; those under attack unable to know about each other; deep moats and high fortifications unable to be taken as secure; stout armor and sharp weapons unable to be taken as strength; and courageous, strong warriors unable to protect their general, then your victory will have realized the Tao. Thus enlightened rulers and generals who know the Tao will certainly first calculate whether they can attain success before the battle, so they will not lose any opportunity for achievement after engaging in battle. Thus if, when the army goes forth it achieves success, while when it returns it is unharmed, the commander is enlightened about military affairs.

[If the enemy is robust and martial], make them tired. If the Three Armies’ warriors can be forced to completely lose their determination, victory can be attained and maintained. For this reason repress the left while you hit the right; then when the right is being defeated the left will not be able to rescue them. Repress the right while you hit the left; then when the left is being defeated the right will not be able to rescue them. For this reason if the army sits about and does not get up, if they avoid battle and are not employed, those close by being few and inadequate for employment, while the distant are dispersed and incapable, [they are exhausted and dispirited and should be attacked].

### Fragments

The *Tactics* states: “The host counters the guest at the border.”

When a guest loves to engage in combat, he will certainly be defeated.



## 20

### Those Who Excel

THOSE WHO EXCEL IN WARFARE, even when the enemy's forces are strong and numerous, can force them to divide and separate, to be unable to rescue each other, and suffer enemy attacks without mutually knowing about it. Thus ditches that are deep and ramparts that are high will be unable to provide security; chariots that are sturdy and weapons that are sharp unable to create awesomeness; and warriors of courage and strength unable to make one strong. Those who excel in warfare control the ravines and evaluate the narrows, incite the Three Armies, and take advantage of contracting and expanding. Enemy troops that are numerous they can make few. Armies fully supplied and well provisioned they can make hungry. Those securely emplaced, unmoving, they can cause to become tired. Those who have gained All under Heaven they can cause to become estranged. When the Three Armies are united, they can cause them to become rancorous.

Thus the army has four roads and five movements. Advancing is a road, withdrawing is a road, left is a road, right is a road. Advancing is a movement, withdrawing is a movement, left is a movement, right is a movement. Silently emplaced is also a movement. For someone to excel these four roads must be penetrating, these five movements must be skillful.

Thus when advancing he cannot be contravened to the fore, when withdrawing he cannot be cut off to the rear. To the left and right he cannot be forced into ravines. Silently remaining in position he can not be troubled by the enemy's men.

Accordingly, he causes the enemy's four roads to be impoverished, his five movements to be invariably troubled. If the enemy advances he will be pressed to the fore; if he withdraws he will be cut off to the rear. To the left and right he will be forced into ravines, while if he remains quietly encamped his army will not avoid misfortune.

Those who excel in warfare can cause the enemy to roll up his armor and race far off; to travel two days normal distance at a time;

to be exhausted and sick but unable to rest; to be hungry and thirsty but unable to eat. An enemy emaciated in this way certainly will not be victorious! Sated, we await his hunger; resting in our emplacement we await his fatigue; in true tranquility we await his movement. Thus our people know about advancing but not about withdrawing. They will trample on naked blades and not turn their heels.

## 21

### Five Names, Five Respects

#### ARMIES HAVE FIVE NAMES :

The first is Awesomely Strong, the second Loftily Arrogant, the third Firmly Unbending, the fourth Fearfully Suspicious, and the fifth Doubly Soft.

In the case of the Awesomely Strong army, be pliant and soft and await them.

In the case of the Loftily Arrogant army, be respectful and outlast them.

In the case of the Firmly Unbending army, entice and then seize them.

In the case of the Fearfully Suspicious army, press them to the fore; set up a clamor on the flanks; deepen your moats and increase the height of your fortifications; and cause difficulty for their supplies.

In the case of the Doubly Soft army, set up a clamor to terrorize them, shake and disrupt them. If they go forth then strike them. If they do not go forth, surround them.

Such are the five names.

Armies have five manifestations of “respect” and five of “brutality.”

What is meant by the five manifestations of respect?

When it crosses the enemy’s border and is respectful, the army loses its normality.

If it acts respectfully twice, the army will not have anywhere to forage.

If it acts respectfully three times, the army will lose its appropriate affairs.

If it acts respectfully four times, the army will not have any food.

If it acts respectfully five times, the army will not attain its objective. Such are the five respects.

When it crosses the border and acts brutally, the army is referred to as a guest.

If it acts brutally twice, it is termed glorious.

If it acts brutally three times, the host’s men are afraid.

If it acts brutally four times, the troops and officers have been deceived.

If it acts brutally five times, the soldiers invariably have been greatly wasted.

The five respects and five brutalities must be mutually implemented.

## 22

# The Army's Losses

**I**F YOU WANT TO EMPLOY that in which the enemy's people are not secure, you should rectify the customs with which you govern the state.

If you want to strengthen and augment the shortcomings in your state's army in order to cause difficulty for the enemy's army in what he is strong, it will be a wasted army.

If you want to strengthen and multiply that in which your state has a paucity in order to respond to that in which the enemy is numerous, it will be a rapidly subjugated army.

If your preparations and strongholds are unable to cause difficulty for the enemy's assault equipment, it will be an "insulted" army.

If your assault equipment is not effective against the enemy's preparations and strongholds, it will be a frustrated army.

If someone excels at deployments, knows the appropriate orientations for forward and rear, and knows the configuration of the terrain, but yet the army frequently suffers difficulty, he is not enlightened about the distinction between states conquering and armies conquering.

If after mobilizing an army cannot flourish great achievements, it is because it does not know about assembling.

If an army loses the people, it does not know about excess.

If an army employs great force but the achievements are small, it does not understand time.

An army that is unable to overcome great adversity is unable to unite the people's minds.

An army that frequently suffers from regret trusts the doubtful.

An army that is unable to discern good fortune and misfortune in the as-yet-unformed does not understand preparations.

When the army sees the good but is dilatory; when the time comes but it is doubtful; when it expels perversity but is unable to dwell in the results, this is the Tao of stopping.

To be lustful yet scrupulous; to be a dragon yet respectful; to be weak yet strong; to be pliant yet firm, this is the Tao of arising.

If you implement the Tao of stopping, then even Heaven and Earth will not be able to make you flourish. If you implement the Tao of arising, then even Heaven and Earth will not be able to obstruct you.

## Fragments

When an army is internally exhausted, even numerous expenditures of energy will not result in solidity.

When you see the enemy is difficult to subdue, if the army still acts wantonly between Heaven and Earth, it will be swiftly defeated.

## 23

### The General's Righteousness

**T**HE GENERAL MUST BE RIGHTEOUS. If he is not righteous then he will not be severe. If he is not severe then he will not be awesome. If he is not awesome then the troops will not die for him. Thus righteousness is the head of the army.

The general must be benevolent. If he is not benevolent then the army will not conquer. If the army does not conquer it will lack achievement. Thus benevolence is the belly of the army.

The general must have Virtue. If he lacks Virtue then he will not have any strength. If he lacks strength the advantages of the Three Armies will not be realized. Thus Virtue is the hands of the army.

The general cannot be without credibility. If he is not trusted then his orders will not be implemented. If his orders are not implemented, then the army will not be unified. If the army is not unified then it will not attain fame. Thus credibility is the feet of the army.

The general must know victory. If he does not know victory, the army will not be decisive. Thus decisiveness is the tail of the army.

## 24

# The General's Virtue

**I**F HE REGARDS THE TROOPS LIKE AN INFANT, loves them like a handsome boy, respects them like a severe teacher, and employs them like clumps of earth, the general excels.

If despite adverse circumstances the battle is not lost, it is the general's wisdom. If he does not slight the few nor suffer incursions from the enemy, if he is as cautious about the end as about the beginning, the general is perspicacious.

His orders not being interfered with and the ruler's commands not entering the army's gate, these are the general's constants. When he enters the army the commanding general forgets his family and assumes sole authority.

In combat the two commanding generals will not both live, the two armies will not both survive. The general of the army's fate hinges upon his troops.

The granting of additional rations and bestowing of irregular rewards, these are the commanding general's beneficence. When the bestowing of rewards does not extend past the day; the imposition of punishments is as quick as turning the face; and they are not affected by the man nor subject to external threats, this is the general of the army's Virtue.

## 25

### The General's Defeats

AS FOR THE GENERAL'S DEFEATS ( DEFECTS ) :

First, he is incapable but believes himself to be capable.

Second, arrogance.

Third, greedy for position.

Fourth, greedy for wealth.

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Sixth, light.

Seventh, obtuse.

Eighth, little courage.

Ninth, courageous but weak.

Tenth, little credibility.

.....

Fourteenth, rarely decisive.

Fifteenth, slow.

Sixteenth, indolent.

Seventeenth, oppressive.

Eighteenth, brutal.

Nineteenth, selfish.

Twentieth, induces confusion.

When the defeats (defects) are numerous the losses will be many.

## 26 The General's Losses

### THE GENERAL'S LOSSES :

First, if he has lost the means for going and coming he can be defeated.

Second, if he gathers together turbulent people and immediately employs them; if he stops retreating troops and immediately engages in battle with them; or if he lacks resources but acts as if he has resources, then he can be defeated.

Third, if he constantly wrangles over right and wrong, and in planning affairs is argumentative and disputatious, he can be defeated.

Fourth, if his commands are not implemented, the masses not unified, he can be defeated.

Fifth, if his subordinates are not submissive and the masses not employable, he can be defeated.

Sixth, if the people regard the army with bitterness, he can be defeated.

Seventh, if the army is "old" he can be defeated.

Eighth, if the army is thinking about home he can be defeated.

Ninth, if the soldiers are deserting he can be defeated.

Tenth, if the soldiers are disordered he can be defeated.

Eleventh, if the army has been frightened several times he can be defeated.

Twelfth, if the soldiers' route requires difficult marching and the masses suffer, he can be defeated.

Thirteenth, if the army is focusing upon ravines and strongpoints and the masses are fatigued, he can be defeated.

Fourteenth, if he engages in battle but is unprepared, he can be defeated.

Fifteenth, if the sun is setting and the road is far while the masses are dispirited, he can be defeated.

Sixteenth . . . . he can be defeated.

Seventeenth, if the troops are restive and the masses afraid, he can be defeated.

Eighteenth, if commands are frequently changed and the masses are furtive, he can be defeated.

Nineteenth, if the army is disintegrating while the masses do not regard their generals and officials as capable, he can be defeated.

Twentieth, if they have been lucky several times and the masses are indolent, he can be defeated.

Twenty-first, if he has numerous doubts so the masses are doubtful, he can be defeated.

Twenty-second, if he hates to hear about his excesses he can be defeated.

Twenty-third, if he appoints the incapable he can be defeated.

Twenty-fourth, if their *ch'i* (spirit) has been injured from being long exposed on campaign he can be defeated.

Twenty-fifth, if their minds are divided at the appointed time for battle he can be defeated.

Twenty-sixth, if he relies upon the enemy becoming dispirited he can be defeated.

Twenty-seventh, if he focuses upon harming others and relies upon ambushes and deceit, he can be defeated.

Twenty-eighth, if the army's chariots lack organization, he can be defeated.

Twenty-ninth, if he deprecates the troops and the minds of the masses are hateful he can be defeated.

Thirtieth, if he is unable to successfully deploy his forces while the route out is constricted, he can be defeated.

Thirty-first, if in the army's forward ranks are soldiers from the rear ranks and they are not coordinated and unified with the forward deployment he can be defeated.

Thirty-second, if in engaging in battle he is concerned about the front and the rear is therefore empty; or, concerned about the rear, the front is empty; or concerned about the left, the right is empty; or concerned about the right, the left is empty—his engaging in battle being filled with worry, he can be defeated.

## 27 Male and Female Cities

**I**F A CITY LIES AMIDST SMALL MARSHES, lacks high mountains and notable valleys, but has moderate sized mounds about its four quarters, it is a “male city” and cannot be attacked.

If an army drinks from flowing water, it is water that will sustain life, and they cannot be attacked.

If before a city there is a notable valley while it has a high mountain behind it, it is a male city and cannot be attacked.

If the terrain within a city is high while it falls away outside it, it is a male city and cannot be attacked.

If within a city there are moderate sized mounds, it is a male city and can not be attacked.

An army that is encamping after being on the march without avoiding notable rivers, whose *ch'i* has been harmed and determination weakened, can be attacked.

A city with a notable valley behind it that lacks high mountains to its left and right is a vacuous city and can be attacked.

Thoroughly incinerated terrain is deadly ground; an army occupying it can be attacked.

If an army drinks stagnant water it is water that will result in death, and they can be attacked.

If a city lies amidst vast marshes and lacks notable valleys and moderate sized mounds, it is a “female city” and can be attacked.

If a city lies between high mountains and lacks notable valleys and moderate sized mounds, it is a female city and can be attacked.

If there is a high mountain in front of a city and a notable valley behind it, while before it the ground ascends and to the rear it descends, it is a female city and can be attacked.



## 28

### Five Criteria, Nine Seizings

OFTEN AN ARMY, finding itself under severe attack, will request the dispatch of rescue forces from far off, but when the rescuers arrive they are also severely defeated. Thus the essential principle for the army is that those fifty kilometers apart do not rescue each other. How much more so is this the case when the nearest are a hundred kilometers apart, the farthest several hundred kilometers. These are the extremes for weighing the army's possibilities. Thus the *Tactics* states: "If your provisions are unlike theirs, do not engage them in protracted battles. If your masses are unlike theirs, do not engage them in battle. If your weapons and component forces are unlike theirs, do not contend with them on confined terrain. If your organization is unlike theirs, do not contend with them across a broad front. If your training is unlike theirs, do not oppose them in their strength. When these five criteria are clear, the army will be able to forcefully advance unhindered.

As for the techniques for forcing the enemy to rush about: The first is called seizing provisions. The second is called seizing water. The third is called seizing fords. The fourth is called seizing roads. The fifth is called seizing ravines. The sixth is called seizing easy terrain. . . . . The ninth is called seizing what he solely values. In general these nine "graspings" are the means by which to force the enemy to hasten about.

## 29

### The Dense and Diffuse

THE DENSE CONQUER THE DIFFUSE; the full conquer the vacuous; byways conquer main roads; the urgent conquer the slow; the numerous conquer the few; the rested conquer the weary.

If they are dense, make them denser; if they are diffuse, disperse them; if they are full, make them fuller; if they are vacuous, make them more vacuous; if they are taking shortcuts, make them shorter; if they are on the road, make the road longer; if they are urgent, make them more urgent; if they are slow, make them slower; if they are numerous, make them more numerous; if they are few, make them fewer; if they are rested, make them more rested; if they are tired, make them more tired.

The dense and diffuse mutually change into each other; the full and vacuous mutually change into each other; the urgent and slow mutually change into each other; the numerous and few mutually change into each other; the rested and tired mutually change into each other.

Do not oppose the dense with the dense; do not oppose the dispersed with the dispersed; do not oppose the full with the full; do not oppose the vacuous with the vacuous; do not oppose the urgent with the urgent; do not oppose the slow with the slow; do not oppose the numerous with the numerous; do not oppose the few with the few; do not oppose the rested with the rested; do not oppose the weary with the weary.

The dense and diffuse mutually oppose each other; the full and vacuous mutually oppose each other; shortcuts and roads mutually oppose each other; the urgent and slow mutually oppose each other; the numerous and few mutually oppose each other; the rested and weary mutually oppose each other.

A dense enemy can be dispersed; the full can be made vacuous; one taking shortcuts can be forced onto main roads; the urgent can be slowed; the numerous can be made few; the rested can be fatigued.

## Unorthodox and Orthodox

THE PATTERNS OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, reaching an extreme and then reversing, becoming full and then being overturned, these are *yin* and *yang*.

In turn flourishing, in turn declining, these are the four seasons.

Having those they conquer, having those they do not conquer, these are the five phases.

Living and dying, these are the myriad things.

Being capable, being incapable, these are the myriad living things.

Having that which is surplus, having that which is insufficient, these are form and strategic power.

Thus as for the disciples of form, there are none that cannot be named. As for the disciples that are named, there are none that cannot be conquered. Thus the Sage conquers the myriad things with the myriad things; therefore his conquering is not impoverished.

In warfare, those with form conquer each other. There are not any forms which cannot be conquered, but none know the form by which one conquers. The changes in the forms of conquest are coterminous with Heaven and Earth and are inexhaustible.

As for the forms of conquest, even the bamboo strips of the Ch'u and Yüeh would be insufficient for writing them down. Those that have form all conquer in accord with their mode of victory. Employing one form of conquest to conquer the myriad forms is not possible. That by which one controls the form is singular; that by which one conquers cannot be single.

Thus when those who excel at warfare discern an enemy's strength, they know where he has a shortcoming. When they discern an enemy's insufficiency, they know where he has a surplus. They perceive victory as easily as seeing the sun and moon. Their measures for victory are like using water to conquer fire.

When form is employed to respond to form, it is orthodox. When the formless controls the formed, it is unorthodox. That the unorthodox and orthodox are inexhaustible is due to differentiation. Differentiate according to unorthodox techniques, exercise control through the five phases, engage in combat with three forces. Once differentiations have been determined things take form. Once forms have been determined they have names.

Things that are the same are inadequate for conquering each other. Thus employ the different to create the unorthodox. Accordingly, take the quiet to be the unorthodox for movement; ease to be the unorthodox for weariness; satiety to be the unorthodox for hunger; order to be the unorthodox for chaos; and the numerous to be the unorthodox for the few.

When action is initiated it becomes the orthodox; what has not yet been initiated is the unorthodox. When the unorthodox is initiated and is not responded to, then it will be victorious. One who has a surplus of the unorthodox will attain surpassing victories.

Thus if when one joint hurts the hundred joints are not used, it is because they are the same body. If, when the front is defeated the rear is not employed, it is because they are the same form.

Thus to realize strategic power in warfare, large formations should not be severed, small formations should not be broken up. The rear should not encroach upon the front, the front should not trample the rear. Those who are advancing should have a route out, those withdrawing should have a route for advancing.

If rewards have not yet been implemented and punishments not yet employed, but the people obey their commands, it is because the people are able to implement them. If rewards are high and punishments pervasive but the people do not obey their commands, it is because the people are not able to implement the commands. In spite of disadvantageous circumstances, to make people advance unto death without turning on their heels is something that even Meng Pen would find difficult; to require it of the people is like trying to make water flow contrary to normal.

Thus to realize strategic combat power, increase the victorious; alter the defeated; rest the weary; feed the hungry. Accordingly the people will see the enemy's men but not yet perceive death; they will tread on naked blades and not turn their heels. Thus when one understands patterns of flowing water, he can float rocks and break boats. When, in employing the people, one realizes their nature, then his commands will be implemented just like flowing water.

# 31

## Five Instructions

SUN-TZU SAID:

“One who excels at instructing the fundamentals does not make changes when directing the army in combat. Thus it is said that there are five instructions: instructions for controlling the state; instructions for arraying the lines; instructions for controlling the army; instructions for controlling deployments; and instructions for making combat advantageous when the armies are hidden and not mutually visible.

“What are the instructions for controlling the state? As for the five virtues of filiality, brotherliness, and goodness, do the warriors lack any one of them? Then even though they can shoot a bow they should not mount a chariot. This being so then those who excel at archery act as the left of the chariot, those who excel at driving act as drivers, and those who lack both skills act as the right. Thus three men are emplaced on a chariot; five men are emplaced in the squad of five; ten men make a line; a hundred men make a company; a thousand men have a drum; ten thousand men act as a martial force and the masses can be employed in great ways. The instructions for controlling the state are such.

“What are the instructions for arraying the lines like? The general’s men must take responsibility even for broken down chariots and exhausted horses, for they provide the means to efficiently advance. If the general establishes himself at ravines and strong points, they will provide the means to be respected and ensure force will be adequate. The instructions for arraying the lines are such.

“What are the instructions for controlling the army like? The soldiers’ leather armor and the wagons’ metal layers are the implements that make it possible to deploy against the enemy . . . . Rewards and honors are the means to make those who excel glorious. Then the deployment will always be advantageous and the formations will be substantial and abundant. The instructions for controlling the army are such.

“What are the instructions like for making combat advantageous when the forces are hidden and not mutually visible? . . . .”

## 32

# Employing Cavalry

(Supplement from the T'ung Tien)

SUN-TZU SAID:

Su "In employing the army there are ten tactical objectives for which the cavalry is advantageous:

"First, when moving to counter an enemy, to arrive first.

"Second, to exploit vacuities at the enemy's back.

"Third, to pursue the scattered and strike the chaotic.

"Fourth, when moving to counter an enemy, to strike their rear, forcing them to run off.

"Fifth, to intercept provisions and foodstuffs, to sever the army's roads.

"Sixth, to defeat forces at fords and passes, to open large and small bridges.

"Seventh, to surprise unprepared troops, to strike as yet unorganized brigades.

"Eighth, to attack lassitude and indolence, to go forth where not expected.

"Ninth, to incinerate accumulated stores and empty out market lanes.

"Tenth, to forage in the fields and countryside, to bind up their children.

"For these ten tactical objectives it is advantageous to employ the cavalry in warfare. Now the cavalry is able to separate and combine, able to disperse and assemble. A hundred kilometers comprise a marching period; for a thousand kilometers they travel forth, their going and coming unbroken. Thus they are termed 'the weapon of separating and combining.' "

## 33

# Attacking the Heart

(A *T'ai-p'ing Yü-lan* Fragment)

SUN PIN OF CH'I addressed the king of Ch'i saying: "Now in the Tao for attacking other states assaulting their hearts is uppermost. Concentrate upon first causing their hearts to submit. Now what Ch'in relies upon as its heart is Yen and Chao. They are about to gather in Yen and Chao's authority. So if today you exercise your persuasion upon the rulers of Yen and Chao, do not use vacuous words and empty phrases. You must turn their hearts with the prospect of substantial profits. This is what is referred to as attacking the heart."